

# GreenCOM Update

A quarterly report from USAID's Environmental Education & Communication Project ♦ April 1998

## Middle East

How Middle East countries address water scarcity—the most difficult environmental problem in the Middle East—can dramatically affect efforts toward peace. While each country has its own water policy and practices, there is an increasing need to share strategies and lessons learned.

GreenCOM, in collaboration with the State Department and USIA, is helping Parties of the Peace Process launch a regional awareness campaign on water efficiency. This project represents the first time GreenCOM has coordinated a campaign across an international region.

In March, GreenCOM managed to bring six interested Parties together to develop a joint strategy to raise young people's awareness of wise water use in the home. Representatives from Jordan, Israel, the Palestinian Areas, Oman, Tunisia, and Morocco—and observers from the U.S., Canada, Norway, Sweden, Russia and Japan—convened in Athens, Greece. The Parties shared current programs and agreed to use AID funding to develop national, broadcast-quality videos on water efficiency targeting children and youth. Further, they agreed to cooperate on a regionwide video early next year.

USIA plans to fund a study tour in the U.S. for selected representatives, as well as a special program for educators, NGO staff, and water policy specialists later this year. Complementary programs may also be funded by other donors.



Photo by Brian Day

*From left to right: Orlando Hernández, GreenCOM; Noga Blitz, Israel; Ziad Darwich Taqash, Jordan; Takashi Ashiki, Japan; Abdulghaffar Abdulkarim Al-Baloushi, Oman.*

## Tanzania

Early this year, GreenCOM joined a large international consortium to help implement USAID/Dar es Salaam's Strategic Objective in sustainable management of natural resources. The consortium is planning major campaigns to:

- ♦ develop a national policy for coastal and marine management
- ♦ work with the Tarangire and Lake Manyara National Parks and local communities to keep wildlife corridors open, and
- ♦ work with the Ugalla Game Reserve and surrounding communities to manage wildlife and other resources.

Led by Irma Allen, GreenCOM will develop and help conduct the Environmental Education and Communications (EE&C) aspects of these efforts.

The three Tanzanian Government counterparts are: TANAPA (the national park service), the National Environmental Management Council, and the Division of Wildlife of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

GreenCOM's partners include EPIQ, USAID's global environmental policy project; the University of Rhode Island's Coastal Resource Center; World Resources Institute; the Department of the Interior's Partnership in Biodiversity; the African Wildlife



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Foundation; Africare; the World Wildlife Fund; Peace Corps; and the Friedkin Conservation Fund. In addition, GreenCOM will work with private-sector players and local NGOs like the Journalists Environmental Association of Tanzania.

## Nicaragua

“If Noah were instructed to build his ark today,” suggests GreenCOM’s guidebook to Nicaraguan parks, “and to begin rounding up two of every living creature, he might want to start in Nicaragua.”

GreenCOM is working with MARENA, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, to produce the guide as part of a campaign to raise awareness, both within and beyond Nicaragua, of the country’s outstanding wealth of biodiversity and opportunities for eco-tourism.

The four-color guide, “Nicaragua... *Naturally*,” plus related brochures and posters address eight priority protected areas of the Pacific and Central regions—and the importance of conserving them. These areas host active volcanoes; dry, mangrove and cloud forests; and pristine beaches.

GreenCOM has worked with a local designer as well as protected-area staff, environmentalists, and interpretation experts to produce the materials, due off the presses this spring.

Two new staff members—Julieta Varrón, the local project manager, and Maritza Rivera, environmental interpretation specialist—are leading the publications effort.

GreenCOM continues to work with MARENA counterpart staff on a Park Guard Training Manual for use throughout Nicaragua. The manual addresses all aspects of park protection, from fire control to environmental education. Workshops to pretest the manual with park guards and technical staff are planned for this summer.

GreenCOM and the University of Idaho are continuing the Volcán Masaya National Park Visitor Study. Nadya Rodríguez, local data collector, conducted interviews and focus groups at the park and prepared data for analysis by her research counterparts at the university. Data collection will finish in May; the final report will be released this summer.

## Egypt

Early 1998 highlights of the Egypt GreenCOM III Project include communication campaigns, monitoring and evaluation, and training.

**Communication Campaigns.** Egypt’s water supply is fixed by treaty with upstream neighbors, yet its population is growing at nearly 3 percent a year—hence an urgent need for increasing water efficiency. Consultant William Mackie trained all 12 members of the Water Communication Unit (WCU) within the Ministry of Public Works and Water Resources to use video to disseminate messages to farmers, who utilize most of the country’s water, and also get feedback from the farmers to help guide policy makers. Mackie helped WCU staff produce a Community Video Letter to the Ministry. Plans have been made for consultant Robert Cowell to conduct training this spring in print-media production.

**Monitoring and Evaluation.** Staff completed the field-worker KAP study and are now using it as the base for field-worker training. The Omnibus Survey of the general public is also finished. GreenCOM has contracted an Egyptian research firm to perform the farmer KAP survey.

**Field-worker Training.** Staff selected an Egyptian firm to train some 200 field engineers, supervisors, and others in communication and management. The year-long training effort will provide an important foundation for future campaigns on water in rural areas. Consultant Mimi Shinn helped develop the program.



Photo by Brian Day

*GreenCOM plans to work with these students at school just outside Tarangire National Park, Tanzania.*

## Nepal

“Where does the forest stand in the national priority?” asked Nepal’s Minister of Soil and Conservation, Hridayesh Tripathy, at GreenCOM’s March community forestry forum. He received dramatic answers in the form of 1) a community video letter (CVL) from a community forestry user group (CFUG) in Nepal’s Midwest Rapti zone, and 2) a computerized video presentation produced by Himalaya Films with GreenCOM assistance.

Senior government officials lauded the forum for providing a rare opportunity for face-to-face dialogue with farmers and other forest users. In fact, the Secretary of the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation indicated that this was his first such meeting.

GreenCOM’s country coordinator Krishna Gautam spent the early winter organizing this first of two fora. Kedar Sharma, a community video consultant to GreenCOM, spent several months training a diverse group from the Rapti CFUG to document their concerns about corruption, forest boundaries, encroachment, and soil erosion. With great sensitivity he taught Brahmins and Untouchables, Tharus and Nepalis, men and women, and adherents of various political leanings. His students learned every aspect of video production—from camera work to script writing and directing. Two CFUG members—a Nepali woman and a Tharu man—traveled to Kathmandu to edit the CVL.

GreenCOM hopes that community video will help break down social barriers and speed delivery of environmental information in a country where both TV and literacy are still uncommon.

## Lebanon

GreenCOM/Lebanon trained PVO partners in participatory environmental rapid assessment (PERA) and helped them develop, field test and revise a PERA toolkit.

Led by GreenCOM consultants Mona Habib and Mohamed Khawlie, these activities supported USAID/Lebanon in their strategic objective of reconstruction and expanded opportunity, with emphasis on democracy, governance, and improved environmental practices in rural areas.

With GreenCOM assistance, partner PVOs Merci Mission International, the Pontifical Mission, and the YMCA field-tested the PERA techniques in 31 communities throughout Lebanon. Projects that community members analyzed for environmental impact range from road-building to starting a mill, and from treating sewage to creating a cooperative farm market.

The concluding workshop and revision of the manual took place in Beirut on January 6-8, 1998. The PERA toolkit will be printed in both Arabic and English.

## Russia/GLOBE

The GLOBE program—Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment—currently involves students and teachers from more than 5,000 schools in more than 65 countries. Initiated by Vice President Al Gore, GLOBE poses particular challenges in the former USSR, where equipment, funds, and Internet connections are scarce.

Victor Misenzhnikov, GLOBE/GreenCOM coordinator in the Perm region, met with other GLOBE staff in St. Petersburg in February to discuss strategies for expanding GLOBE throughout Russia. Last year, Misenzhnikov helped launch the GLOBE Center and five model GLOBE schools in Perm.

In March, USAID representative Elmira Starchevskaja inspected the Perm GLOBE program and expressed great satisfaction with its progress under GreenCOM.

This quarter, Misenzhnikov also helped another twelve schools begin taking measurements that do not require extensive equipment. Students and teachers defined geographical coordinates for each school and sent completed questionnaires to the Russian national coordinator for GLOBE, Marina Dobroljubova, in Moscow.

Students from Perm Globe schools continued their measurements of temperature, cloud type, cloud cover, and depth of snow cover.

## Research

Each year GreenCOM organizes a meeting of its Technical Advisory Group (TAG), composed of leading experts in behavior change, environmental

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